GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINORITY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1123
ANSWERED ON:08.02.2017
Haj Quota
Jayavardhan Dr. Jayakumar;Kumar Shri Ashwini;Mahadik Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao;Mullappally Shri Ramachandran;Patil Shri Vijaysinh Mohite;Reddy Shri Ch. Malla;Satav Shri Rajeev Shankarrao;Sule Smt. Supriya Sadanand

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

a) whether Saudi Arabia has increased India"s annual Haj quota and if so, the details thereof;

b) the manner in which the Haj quota is likely to be allocated to each State particularly Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana;

c) whether the Supreme Court directed the Government to gradually reduce the subsidy and completely remove it by 2022;

d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

e) whether the Government has formed a Committee to look into the issue of Haj subsidy and if so, the details thereof along with composition of the Committee and the main issue to be taken up by the Committee; and

f) the time by which the Committee is likely to submit its report to the Government?

Answer

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
(SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI)

(a) Yes, Madam. As per the Annual Bilateral Agreement signed between India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Haj 2017, a quota of 1,70,025 pilgrims (1,25,025 seats for Haj Committee of India and 45,000 seats for Private Tour Operators) has been allocated as against the quota of 1,36,020 pilgrims (1,00,020 seats for Haj Committee of India and 36,000 seats for Private Tour Operators) during previous year.

(b) The quota allotted to Haj Committee of India are allocated to all States/ Union Territories Haj Committees including the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana, in proportion of their Muslim population as per Census 2011.

(c) and (d) Yes, Madam. The Supreme Court while dealing with the Special Leave Petition (Civil) No.28609 of 2011 vide its Order dated 08.05.2012 and 13.04.2013, inter alia observed that Haj subsidy is something that is best done away with and directed the Central Government to progressively reduce the amount of subsidy so as to completely eliminate within a period of 10 years. Accordingly, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), which is responsible for making air travel arrangements for Haj Pilgrims identified by HCoI and to provide subsidy towards airfare payable to the airlines, has progressively reduced the subsidy for Haj operations from the year 2012 onwards. An amount of Rs.836.56 crore as subsidy was given by the Government in 2012-13. Progressively, it reduced to Rs.680.03 crore in the year 2013-14 , Rs.577.07 cror in 2014-15, Rs. 529.51 crore in 2015-16 and Rs. 405 crore (approx) in the year 2016-17.

(e) and (f) Every year a Haj Air Travel Committee (HATC) is constituted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to look into the various aspects of air travel arrangements for Haj pilgrimage. For Haj 2017, the HATC has been constituted on 02.01.2017 under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary, MoCA and comprising of Joint Secretary level Officers of Ministry of Minority Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Director, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Chief Executive Officer, HCoI and a representative of Airports Authority of India.

Besides the above, Ministry of Minority Affairs has constituted a Committee on 31.01.2017 to review the Haj Policy 2013-17 and to suggest framework for Haj Policy 2018-22. This Committee comprises of Shri Afzal Amanullah, IAS (Retired), former Secretary to Government of India and former Consul General, Consulate General of India, Jeddah, Justice S.S. Parkar, Retired Judge of Bombay High Court, Shri Qaiser Shamim, IRS (Retd), former Chairman, Haj Committee of India, Shri Kamal Faruqui, noted Chartered Accountant & Muslim Scholar, Shri Michael Mascarenhas, former CMD, Air India and Shri J. Alam, Joint Secretary, in-charge of Haj, Ministry of Minority Affairs. The main issues taken up by the Committee are as under:

(i) Review the existing Haj policy pertaining to HCoI and PTOs in the light of its objectives and achievements.

(ii) Examine implications of various directions of the Supreme Court with regard to the existing policy and to suggest suitable amendments in the said policy in the light of such directions.

(iii) Review the effectiveness of arrangements made by HCoI for Haj pilgrims' accommodation and air travel including issues related with Haj subsidy.

(iv) Examine the effectiveness of inter-relationship and coordination in the functioning of Haj Committee of India and CGI.

(v) Examine the aspects of transparency, consumer satisfaction and disclosure requirements for PTOs to protect interest of the Haj Pilgrims with a view to make the new policy of greater assistance to the pilgrims.

(vi) Suggest measure for ensuring fair competition among PTOs and enhanced value for services provided by them.

(vii) Suggest the framework for new Haj policy for HCoI and PTOs.

The Committee has been given a time of three months from its constitution for submission of report.

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